

Religion and Ritual in the Yucatan
MAYAN CULTURE



Mayan J'Men Jose Tamay

lives in the Mayan village of Xcalacoop, nearby Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico. Jose Tamay is an active Maya Foundation In Laakeech's Board of Trustees who celebrates many Mayan holistic rituals and sacred ceremonies with utmost respect and honor to Junab K'uj (Mayan Supreme God) and to the Mayan spiritual guardians at the Hacienda Chichen sacred ceremonial grounds. His kind spirit and dedication to the Maya sacred traditions has earned him the respect of J-Men Elders and Senior Mayan Wiseman in Yucatan, Mexico.

What does being a Mayan healer involve?

In an effort to preserve and share our Mayan ancestors' traditions and wisdom, we, J-Men or Mayan Holistic Healers and Priests, continue teaching and practicing sacred Mayan knowledge, healing and spiritual traditions passed verbally and practices from generation to generation. As a J'Men I have the privilege to serve God and my community health and spiritual needs and continue preserving my Mayan spiritual heritage and Mayan Cosmo-vision knowledge to future generations.

What does the title J'Men mean?

To the Maya people, a J'Men is a "Holistic Healer and Shaman", J'Men is the titled given by the Senior Healers and Priest to a respected Medicine Wiseman known for his understanding of holistic Mayan healing and sacred healing rituals. Maya people healing requires more than knowledge of medicinal plants and natural remedies... a J'Men works with Mayan sacred healing rituals and ceremonies as well as with spiritual "vision" and "insight" to understand a person's Chu'el (integral energies: souls, mind, body, emotions, aura, and non-physical bodies). A person's Chu'el holistic harmony may be imbalance due to internal or external factors that affect a person's wholeness and can manifest in spiritual, mental, emotional, or/and physical ailments.

Can you describe your "education?"

I have studied with many Mayan J'Men and medicine females that have taught me about Mayan medicinal plants, preparation of healing remedies, healing techniques and holistic healing energy care as well as the importance of holistic healing rituals and ceremonies... all part of the Mayan Healing traditions still practice today in Yucatan and other Mayan lands in Central America. Senior Mayan Priest and Elder J'Men, Don Bartolomee Poot Nahuat has taken me under his guidance and teachings for many years as he recognizes the spiritual healing gift in me and is committed to helping me grow in my medicinal and shamanic education and service to my people.

Can you tell us about your home village?

Xcalacoop is a Mayan rural village 8km away from the ancient Mayan archaeological zone of Chichen Itza, in Yucatan, Mexico. My grandfather was one of the founders of Xcalacoop many years ago. Xcalacoop is a Mayan name that means "between two dried cenotes or "rejoyadas" as these natural geological formations are called in Spanish.

What do the Maya believe about the creation of Man?

Many Mayan people after the Spanish Colonial Conquest began blending Mayan spiritual beliefs with Catholicism and Christian teachings; since then, scientific studies have proved that man has evolved from primal life forms and forces in the planet. That said, I think I best answer the question by saying that ancient Mayan mythology portrays Gods and Deities first creating "Man" out of clay, but this creature was not satisfying to them, so clay-man dissolved and crumbled away.

The Mayan gods then created a being of wood which had no soul; thus, this "wood-manly-being" had no recollection of its creators; so the gods had it burn. Then the Maya Gods and Deities chose to form a third kind of man, this time from corn and they were pleased. Therefore, ancient Mayas believed, and many of us respect such belief but understand its symbolism, to be the son's of maize.

Can you offer an historic overview of Maya culture?

The ancient Maya civilization is the highest cultural legacy of Mesoamerica. The Maya are believed to originate in the Yucatán around 2600 B.C. They developed the mathematical position of zero, along with a highly advanced understanding of many sciences including a unique mathematical system, impressive knowledge about the cosmos astronomy, exact multi-calendar system, majestic architectural achievements, medicinal care including herbal healing, sacred holistic ceremonies, and a complex hieroglyphic writing combining phonetic suffixes, prefixes and detailed artistic symbols within its format.

What is nature's role in Mayan life?

Our understanding and observation of Nature, Earth's cycles, the Cosmos, life and death, play an important role in the Maya Spiritual and Religious beliefs and way of life.

The shamanic Mayan traditions teach us (J'Men) that humans are a holistic expression of the Universe's cosmic creative intelligence; we are expressions of spiritual unfolding living consciousness manifested in a soul/body hologram emerging within planet Earth's evolutionary trajectory.

Maya Cosmo-vision traditions help us appreciate that we share a common holistic foundation of existence with all living matter (Mother Nature) and non-visual powers of our planet. Spiritual reverence in our daily appreciation of our planet's natural life source, and reconciliation with our planet's unique living global system is a central teaching in the Mayan holistic spiritual traditions.

Traditional Mayan Ceremony



